

# REHEARSAL.

1. An Account the Country-man gives of his Conversion, as to the Notion of the Church, of Schism, and of Occasional Conformity for Places. With his Bold Challenge to all the Dissenters to Answer him.
2. His Description of the Effects the Observators, &c. have among the Common People.
3. The Rehearsal's Application. With the Attestation of two Kings, and a Parliament, to Justifie the Necessity of his Undertaking.

From Saturday July the 21th, to Saturday July the 28th. 1705.

(1.) Rehearsal. **I**N our last Conversation, Honest Country-man, thou gav'st me a full Account of thy Conversion as to the State Point. But thou said'st nothing as to the Church. Have I made no Impression upon thee as to That?

Country-man. It was only want of Time that I said nothing as to That. There is as much done on that side, as on the Other. In thy Rehearsal. N. 20. Thou hast brought the Matter of the Church, of Schism, and of Occasional Conformity, so Home to our own Doors, in such Ease and Familiar a manner, as the Dullest of Us cannot but See it, nay we Feel it. We have often Battell'd it among our selves, in our own Blunt way. And there is not one of Us, that is an Husband, a Father, or a Master, but are all on thy side. They say, that none of them can sleep Safe in their Beds one Night, or have any sort of Order or Government in their own Families, unless the Plea of the Non-Cons be allow'd, especially of these Occasional Conformists, for Places. Unless we suppose That Christ our Lord had less Regard to his Church, Purchas'd with his own Blood, out of all the Nations of the Earth, as a Peculiar People to Himself, and Members of His own Body, of his Flesh and of his Bones; And Heirs of God, through Him, their Elder Brother; And against whom He has Promis'd, That the Gates of Hell shall not Prevail; I say, unless we think, That our Lord Christ has less Regard for this Church, for its Support, Peace, and Unity, than he has for the meanest Farmer's Family; we must acknowledge the Simile you have given there, to Run on all Four, and to be Exactly Parallel. For the Church is call'd a Family, of which Christ is the Head.

I have ask'd our Non-Con-Teachers, what they had to say to it? They could give no Answer, that my Child of Ten Years old cou'd not make a Fool of. That wou'd not Justify my Wife, my Child, my Servant, to Run away from me. Nay more, to Assault me. to turn me out of my own Doors, and to Cut my Throat, if they cou'd Do no Better. And if they Cry'd Conscience! All was well.

This Rais'd an Abhorrence in me. I have gone Round them all, and can find no other Answer. And I desire thee to put it in Print, to see if all of them put together can give any Answer to it, or to shew wherein the Cases are not exactly Parallel.

O Dear! I love to have things made thus Plain to Us. Here's no Intricacy of Learning, nor long Quotations out of Books we don't Understand; But a Perfect Picture made of it, that nothing but Downright Obstinacy can hold out

against. And shews, that it is not Conscience, but some Intrigue and Design is at the Bottom.

Rehearsal. I give thee leave to make this Challenge to them All. And I will stand by thee in it. Let them Answer that single Rehearsal. This may be thought Self-Conceit. But I do it on Purpose, as I do with the Whigs, on the Point of Government, to Provoke them to Answer, which I know they Cannot. And then to Expose them for their Silence. And to gain over more of my Country-men, as I have done Thee. And I tell them, That is my Design. And that I have Gain'd Several already. And will do more. Till the Dissenters that remain become the Contempt and Abhorrence of the Nation unless they Repent, and joyn with Us to Bury their Horrid Principles in Eternal Oblivion. And then—— And not till Then—— We shall have Peace and Union.

If they will not Answer, we will Write over them; And gain the Nation from them, as we did before. They have not forgot it. And we tell them, that we will do it again. And that this is the Design of this Paper, as it is. We are now About it. If this be not Provocation Sufficient, let all the World see them Self Condemn'd, Beat down, and Humbl'd! They Bellow and Roar, Like a Spirit DIS-POSSESS'D. But have not a Word to say. The Case is Plain. And there is not a Country Farmer in England, but can see through it. We are Above them. And will keep Above them. Let them do what they can. For they can do nothing. There is neither Sense nor Reason on their side. We know all that they can say. They have said it a Thousand times, in Queen Elizabeth's time, and ever since. And all that they have said put together cannot Answer that single Half-Sheet of a Rehearsal, or shew, that their Case differs in one Tittle from the Case there put. They have had Many and Learned Answers to all their Pretences. To which they never did or cou'd Reply any thing; but, as I said before, like the Cuckoo, by Repeating their old Objections over and over again, without taking any Notice of the Solid and Substantial Answers which they had already Receiv'd. Of this I spoke before, N. 16. &c. And finding nothing wou'd do with them. I made a Brief State of their Case, N. 20. Familiar, as thou say'st, Country-man, to thy Understanding. And this Sticks in their Throat to this Day. Which is the thing I now am Provoking them to Answer. But have little Hopes! For they know it is a true State of their Case. And their very Case. And being put in the Person of Another, wherein Every Body is Concern'd, it appears

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Ridiculous and Abhorrent to Every Body. And Every Body is Capable of Judging it. Therefore I think we may Leave them. And that we shall Hear no more from them. They are Cut at the Root, and must Withers, with all Men of Common Sense, or Honesty. Nay with Themselves. For there is not a Dissenter in England, would Endure Himself, that is, another in his own Shape, and with his Pretences, to stay an Hour under his Roof. For which I Appeal to every Dissenter, and to every single Man in England, or in the World; according to the State of the Case, N. 20. and likewise, whether the Case be not Truly put? So that I think this Cause cannot be Push'd further.

(2.) Country-m. Thou hast made things so PLAIN, Master, That he that Runs may Read. Which if thou had'st not done, it had been of little Use to us poor Country-Folks, who Read no Books, and Learn only by Conversation. Which being mostly among our selves, we seldom Grow Wiser. For how shou'd we? All the Information we had, was from the Observators, and the Like. We met every Night that the News came in, at a Coffee-House, an Ale-House, or sometimes a Barn. And some one among us that Cou'd Read, took out Mr. Observer, and Read it aloud to Us all, who Harken'd to it more Attentively than to a Sermon. Then the Discourse began, and every one pass'd his Verdict—All on the Observer's side, for we knew no otherwise. The same Course was taken in London. I have seen there an old Cobbler, sitting in his Stall in the Street, lay by his Auls, put on his Spectacles, and Gravely Reading the Observer Aloud, to a listning Ring of Mobb. And when any thing Smutty or Prophane came out, they set up a Laugh you might have heard to the End of the Street. But when the Government and Administration came to be Expos'd, they look'd Wise and shook their Heads, and wou'd say, Come, Come, This will not Do—All is Wrong, and so forth, which I Dare not Repeat.

But their Mirth and Indignation were joyn'd, when the Observer fell upon the Church and the Clergy. When Squintifego came out, or Reverend Father in Satan, they wou'd Cry, That again! And it wou'd be Echo'd through the Crowd. When they Hear'd out of the Observer, That whenever a Clergy-Man went into any House, it was either to Pick the Man's Pocket, or to Cuckold him; they wou'd Clinch their Fists, and say, my Oaken Towel shall be upon any Black-Coat that comes near my House. When the Observer Argues, That the Clergy are all Beggars, they live meerly upon the Alms of the People, and ought to have no Votes for Parliament-Men; they Cry'd, Masi! Neighbours, he is in the Right. And we keep our Alms-Folks too Fine? 'Tis time they were Reduc'd.

But when Getting Ready their MARSTON-MOOR and EDGE-HILL Swords and Guns was Read—They put on a Different Air. They Clapt their Wings, and Cry'd Ha! My Boys—

I will not take upon me to say what Consequence there may be in all this, to the Church or the State. To be thus made Vile in the Eyes of the Meanest of the People. But surely, they who can Lead them into such Open Contempt of their Governours, both in Church and State: can Lead them into the Field too. They have done it before, When Reverence to Government is lost, Obedience sits very loose. Is it nothing to have the Mobb of a Nation ENFLAM'D, CORRUPTED, and DEBAUCH'D in their Principles and Affection to both Church and State; That that which should be their Reverence, is become their Jest and their Aversion! Is there

no Alarm to let them be made Tinder, to kindle Fire at every Spark?

(3.) Rehears. It is that by which Absalom stole the Hearts of the People. There is none to do Justice—Wou'd I were made a Judge—Just the same Doings were before the Rebellion of Forty-One. As silly Pamphlets and Papers as any now came out. The Cobbler of Gloucester, and others so Senseless, that men of Figure thought it a Reflection upon them to Meddle with them. And that they cou'd do no Hurt. The King was Mind'd of it then, and thought the same. But was convinc'd of his Error, when it was too late, when he Issu'd his Declaration of May 5. 1642. set down in Ld. Clarendon's History, Vol. 1. p. 408. wherein he Attributes the chief Cause of those Troubles, to these very Papers, which, says he, Wou'd fore the High and Royal Dignity wherein God had plac'd him, to take Notice of—[For which Reason, they Notic'd off his Head!] but he Adds, Notwithstanding his Majesty's earnest Desire, so often, in vain, Press'd for a Reformation. His Desire! Why? It was his Office to have Reform'd it. And his Departing from that Power wherewith God had Invested him; And becoming a Petitioner to his Subjects for Justice, was really a Divesting of Himself, and a Betraying of the Authority of God, which he Bore. But there were Faults in others, as he goes on in the said Declaration, That whilst the Presses swarm'd with, and every Day produc'd new Traacts against the Establish'd Government of the Church and State, most Men wanted the Courage or the Conscience to write—[that is in Opposition to them] either to preserve the Minds of his good Subjects from such infections, or Restore and Recover them, when they were Infected. And the Objection was, as Now; They are Nasty, Scoundrel Papers, and it is Below any Man of Character to Engage with them! It was Below the King to take Notice, or the Clergy to Answer, for Fear of Dirtying their Fingers, or Defiling their Characters! And so they were Both brought Below indeed!

But I go on. It was not only the Thoughts of the King upon this Point, but of the whole Nation in Parliament Assembl'd, 13. Car. 2. c. 1. Which Says, That the Growth and Encrease of the late Troubles and Disorders, did in a very great Measure Proceed from a Multitude of Seditious Sermons, Pamphlets, and Speeches, daily Preached and Published, with a Transcendent Boldness, Defaming the Person and Government of your Majesty, and your Royal Father, wherein Men were too much Encouraged: And above all, from the willful mistake of the Supream and Lawful Authority; whilst men were forward to Cry up and Maintain those Orders and Ordinances, Oaths and Covenants, to be Acts Legal and Warrantable, which in themselves had not the Least Colour of Law or Justice to Support them; from which Kind of Distempers, as the present Age is not wholly freed, so Posterity may be Apt to Relaps into them, if timely Remedy be not Provided.

Now Country-man, my Labour has been, in the first Place, to Give a True Notion of the Supream and Lawful Authority, to the Mistake of which the Parliament Ascribes, Above all, the Cause of our Late Confusions. And in the next Place, to Encounter our Scandalous Pamphleteers, who had the Second Part in our Rebellions, by the Opinion of Two Kings and Parliament.

And if in this, I have been the Scavenger of the Church, as the Observer Calls me, I will Condescend yet Lower, if I may be Serviceable, in any Capacity, to Vindicate the Truth of God; the Authority of His Church; and the Rights of the Crown; wherein Consist, the True Liberty and Property of the Subject; And,

The Peace and Happiness of England. Which God send.